

thickness setting, and a subsequent calibrator which has a predetermined second thickness setting not less than said predetermined first thickness setting.

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33. The method of claim 32 wherein said calibrator is fluid cooled so as to cool the extruded product to a temperature range of about 5 to about 60 degrees Celsius.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 20 were originally presented for examination. In a first Office Action, the Examiner restricted claims 1 through 20 into two groups, namely, method claims 1 through 10 as Group 1, and product claims 11 through 20 as Group 2. In response, applicant elected the product claims 11 through 20. Applicant hereby accepts the restriction requirement without traverse. In the Office Action of January 15, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 11 through 20 under 35USC102(b) or 35USC103(a) as

anticipated by or in view of the Cope patent. In response, the above amendments are presented.

The Cope patent cited by Examiner is directed to a method of making a polymer and wood flour composite extrusion utilizing plastic extrusion materials that may be polyvinyl chloride mixed with cellulosic product. However, the Cope patent forms a consistent solid product that is a composite extrusion. The present invention is directed to forming a heterogeneous product with a skin. This is now expressly stated in newly submitted main claims 21 and 27. Additionally, Cope does not teach forming a product having a foam skin and a foam core by using a post-extrusion slow cooling step as set forth in new claim 21, nor does Cope teach a post-extrusion rapid cooling step to form a product having a solid skin and a foam core as set forth in new claim 27.

In addition to the above critical differences between Cope and the present invention, the Cope patent does not follow the steps of the present invention. In fact, Cope teaches formation of the mixture at very high temperatures, above those of the present invention. For example, the extruder temperature zones of Cope go to as high as 360° F and 370° F and include at least four zones maintained about the maximum

temperatures of the present invention process. This difference alone results in different products.

Further, Cope teaches cooling after mixing, wherein cooling is down to 100° F (about 70° Celsius). The present invention process cools down to a range of 25° Celsius to 60° Celsius. Thus, the present invention creates low density product of specific characteristics.

Additionally, Cope cools after mixing whereas the present invention process requires that the mixture continue to be mixed during cooling. Thus, Cope has a process that yields a high density product with different characteristics than the low density skinned product of the present invention.

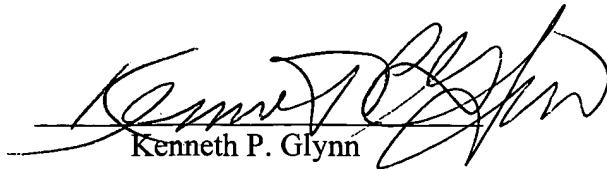
For all of the above reasons, the present invention is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the Cope patent.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is urged that claims 21 through 33, the only claims remaining in the case, are in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable response is earnestly solicited.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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